

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13

/063 W

-----130837Z 095169 /20

P R 130719Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3072

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

DIA WASHDC

SECDEF WASHDC

USIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE DAMASCUS 3032

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SY, US

SUBJECT: AL-ASSAD'S RETURN PROMPTS ANOTHER FLURRY OF NEWS
REPORTS ON TALKS

SUMMARY: AL-ASSAD'S RETURN FROM GENEVA PRECIPITATED ANOTHER
ROUND OF LAUDATORY STORIES ABOUT TRIP'S RESULTS. PRESS
FOCUSED ON FOREIGN NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS TO HIGHLIGHT TRIP'S
SUCCESS. NEWS ARTICLES DISPLAYED CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN
RECENT COMMENTS FROM US OFFICIALS ON ME PEACE EFFORTS.
SYRIAN PRESS ALSO REPORTED ISRAELI DISMAY WITH RECENT
DEVELOPMENTS. EDITORIALS MORE RESERVED, ADMITTING THAT GOOD
START HAD BEEN MADE, BUT CAUTIONING ON NEED TO WAIT AND SEE
WHAT COMING MONTHS WOULD BRING. END SUMMARY.

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1. RETURN OF AL-ASSAD FROM SWITZERLAND GENERATED FURTHER
MEDIA COVERAGE MAY 12 OF RESULTS HIS TALKS WITH PRES.
CARTER. OVERALL, TONE OF NEWS STORIES AND COMMENTARY WAS
DECIDEDLY UPBEAT. WRAP-UP COVERAGE OF CARTER-ASSAD
ENCOUNTER EXCEEDED THAT WHICH FOLLOWED AL-ASSAD'S RETURN
FROM THE SOVIET UNION WHICH WAS EXTENSIVE. PRESS FOCUSED

ON FOREIGN NEWSPAPER COMMENTS WHICH PORTRAYED TALKS AS IMPORTANT AND WHICH GAVE PROMINENCE TO BREZINSKI'S COMMENTS ON US PEACE EFFORTS.

2. ALL DAILIES LED WITH ASSAD'S RETURN. BAATH HEADLINED: "ARABS WELCOME AND DISCUSS AMERICAN INITIATIVE." TISHRIIN BANNERED: "GENEVA MEETING CAUSES OPTIMISM IN INTERNATIONAL QUARTERS INTERESTED IN ME." TISHRIIN IN SOARING HYPERBOLE WROTE: "THE GENEVA ENCOUNTER HAS ATTRACTED INTEREST THE LIKE OF WHICH RARELY HAVE BEEN PRODUCED BY A MEETING OF ANY OTHER TWO LEADERS." THIS INTEREST ATTRIBUTED TO AL-ASSAD'S "DISTINCTIVE" POSITION AMONG ARABS AND CARTER'S HEADING OF STATE WHICH CO-CHAIRMAN OF GENEVA CONFERENCE AND WHICH HAS SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL. ARTICLE REPORTED BRZEZINSKI'S STATEMENT IN WHICH HE EXPRESSED OPTIMISM TOWARD POSSIBILITIES RESOLVING ME CONFLICT AND DECLARED PRESIDENT'S READINESS TO GO TO GENEVA IF THAT WOULD LEAD TO GENUINE SETTLEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.

3. PRESS CITED US MEDIA REPORT THAT AMERICAN OFFICIALS INDICATED CHANCES FOR PEACE HAD BECOME ESPECIALLY GOOD FOLLOWING THIS MEETING CARTER SAID TO HAVE DEVOTED INTENSE PERSONAL EFFORT TO PROBLEM.

4. SYRIAN PRESS ALSO REPORTED ANXIETY OF ISRAEL AND ITS ADVOCATES IN US OVER RECENT DEVELOPMENTS. STORY CLAIMED ISRAELI SUPPORTERS IN CONGRESS WERE ANGRY THAT US MIGHT BE SERIOUSLY STUDYING "SADAT PROPOSAL" FOR US OPEN DIALOGUE WITH THE PLO. ARTICLE NOTED THAT DEPT. PRESS SPOKES-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MAN BROWN HAD REFUSED TO RULE OUT IDEA THAT SECRETARY MIGHT MEET WITH PLO OFFICIALS DURING HIS NEXT TRIP TO THE AREA. OBSERVERS IN WASHINGTON, IT CLAIMED, SAY ISRAELI ANGER, AROUSED OVER REPORTS THAT US INTENDS EXCLUDE ISRAEL FROM LIST OF STATES WHICH WILL RECEIVE PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT IN SUPPLY OF ADVANCED WEAPONS, HAD TURNED TO FEAR BECAUSE OF PERCEPTION CURRENT US ADMINISTRATION SHOWING SOME UNDERSTANDING FOR ARAB VIEWPOINT, "WHICH HAD BEEN IGNORED IN THE PAST." IT REPORTED THAT RABIN IN RADIO INTERVIEW EXPRESSED APPREHENSION OVER SOME OF CARTER'S STATEMENTS ON SECURITY MEASURES SUCH AS BUFFER ZONES ALONG THE BORDERS AND EARLY WARNING STATION WHICH ISRAELI SOURCES CHARGED ARE NO SUBSTITUTE FOR DEFENSIBLE BORDERS.

5. COMMENTARIES, WHILE GENERALLY GIVING CREDIT TO US FOR MAKING GOOD START, TOOK CAUTIOUS STANCE TOWARDS U RESOLVE TO BRING ABOUT SETTLEMENT. THAWRAH COLUMNIST, IN PIECE ENTITLED "THE COMING MONTHS ARE TEST OF GOOD INTENTIONS", WROTE THAT "REGARDLESS OF ATMOSPHERE WHICH

PREVAILED AT GENEVA ENCOUNTER, THE OPTIMISM OVER POSSIBILITIES
OF BRINGING ABOUT JUST, PERMANENT AND LASTING PEACE IS
CAUTIOUS." COLUMNIST ASSERTED THAT IT NECESSARY TO WAIT
AND SEE WHAT WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED IN COMING MONTHS SINCE
"ONE CANNOT RISK MAKING STATEMENTS THAT COULD LOSE THEIR
ACCURACY AND OBJECTIVITY AS EVENTS DEVELOP." IN SIMILAR
VEIN JIBRAN KURIYYA WROTE IN TISHRIIN THAT POSSIBILITIES
FOR JUST SETTLEMENT DO NOT MEAN THAT "PEACE HAS BECOME NEAR
AT HAND NOR DOES IT MEAN THAT US HAS SHIFTED TO POSITIONS
VERY CLOSE TO ARAB POSITIONS OR IDENTICAL TO THEM." HE
NOTED THAT SOME "NEW ELEMENTS" IN THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S
POLICY ARE ENCOURAGING. HOWEVER, HE WARNED THAT ARABS MUST
NOT FORGET THAT SACRIFICES, DETERMINATION AND STRENGTH
REMAIN DECISIVE FACTORS WHICH HAVE WON FOR ARABS RESPECT
AND ADMIRATION OF THE WORLD.
MURPHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NEWS MEDIA COMMENTS, CHIEFS OF STATE MEETINGS
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
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Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2541098
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
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TAGS: PFOR, SY, US, (ASAD, HAFIZ), (CARTER, JIMMY)
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